

Paratroopers Make Progress in Fallujah

*Spc. Michael J. Carden
82nd Airborne Division*

AL FALLUJAH, Iraq-In the early morning of Oct. 31, members of the 1st Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 82nd Airborne Division captured Shakir Mahmood Hussein Al Mashhadani, a former Iraqi Air Force Colonel, and three other anti-coalition personnel.

At Mashhadani's Fallujah home, the paratroopers found compromising information connecting him to many recent improvised explosive device (IED) attacks against U.S. troops and several letters addressed from himself to Saddam Hussein concerning weapons development, according to 82nd officials.

The troops also discovered a cache of weapons, said Col. Jefforey Smith, commander, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division. Items found included IEDs, IED making materials, AK-47s, RPGs and maps pinpointing where these home-

made bombs have been place throughout the city. Also, documents of significant intelligence value were found, said Smith.

Military intelligence personnel are currently analyzing these documents. They give much credit for the seizure of these items and personnel to the pro-Coalition residents in the local area.

"More and more, the residents of Fallujah are informing us of anti-coalition activities," said Maj. Steve Sears, Fire Support Officer, 3rd BCT, 82nd Abn. Div. "They've provided us with valuable information that has helped us rid the area of former regime loyalists, criminals and extremists."

Residents have provided the troops with locations of mortar fire aimed toward compounds inhabited by Coalition troops. This has



U.S. Army photo by Combat Camera

Found -A paratrooper from 1st Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 82nd Airborne Division, roles up a map found during a raid Oct. 31 in Fallujah.

the mob. In this altercation, a police officer shot and killed one of the protestors. This caused the crowd to flee, only to return a short time later and attack with RPGs, small arms fire and satchel charges.

The assailants fired on the mayor's office, damaging nine in the building

allowed the soldiers to engage the incoming fire more efficiently, Sears said.

"We know this to be correct because people in Al Karma and Fallujah have come forward to inform us of two personnel killed and one wounded during our counter mortar fire," Sears explained.

Also, with the help of the local citizens, Coalition troops have made progress when encountering IEDs and the individuals who place them in various locations.

This progress is evidenced by in a recent situation where Coalition snipers killed one individual and wounded another while they attempted to position homemade bombs.

"Most of the information we receive for our tactical operations comes directly from the Iraqi people," Smith explained. "This continued cooperation, coupled with our civil affairs initiatives, will undoubtedly lead to the defeat of threat forces in Fallujah, as well as contribute to the overall goals and objectives of Coalition forces in Iraq."

Later in the day, family members of Mashhadani, protested for his release at the Mayor's Office.

With a number of police officials by his side, Mayor Taha Badewi addressed the angry group, denying pleas to free Mashhadani.

During the demonstration, a physical confrontation began between the police and

"More and more, the residents of Fallujah are informing us of anti-coalition activities,"

Maj. Steve Sears

and destroying the mayor's car.

Fallujah police officials immediately requested help from Coalition Forces in the area. Paratroopers from 1st Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 82nd Airborne Division, secured the area and began developing a plan to apprehend the aggressors responsible for the attack.



ON THE COVER - Sgt. 1st Class Albert Pando works to ensure claims are handled in a quick and organized manner in the Civil Military Operations Center. See story on page 4. (U.S. Army photo by Cpl. Joe Niesen)

Crime College for Iraqis

Pfc. J. H. French

82nd Airborne Division PAO

AR RAMADI, Iraq - A puddle of blood on the ground, footprints leading away from the scene and a weapon lying nearby. This is not the scene of a brutal murder, but a practical exercise at the Al Anbar Security College.

The purpose of the college is to educate and train the Iraqi police force of the region so it can provide safety and security for the people of the Al Anbar province. Soldiers from the 94th Military Police Company, a reserve unit from Manchester, N.H., provided the training.

According to Staff Sgt. Bruce A. Hale, who is in charge of quality control for the college, the ultimate goal is to take the best students and make them the teachers. He said the college is scheduled to be run entirely by local police officials by February.

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U.S. Army photo by Pfc. Johnnie French

How To -A judge from Ar Ramadi teaches the Al Anbar Security College's inaugural class how to prepare a case for presentation to the court system.

enthusiastic," said Sgt. Maj. Matthew J. Demmit, commandant of the college. "One day their bus broke down so they walked all the way from downtown Ar Ramadi to make it to class on time."

Some of the students drive over 200 kilometers a day to attend the class, Hale noted.

Students traveling to the three-week course learn everything from unarmed self-defense to religious tolerance. The students are already police officers, and they are attending the classes to learn about changes in law and how to apply and enforce them in the new government. They are also reviewing criminal procedures and Miranda rights.

The individual classes include communications, ethics, accident reporting, Iraqi law, criminal procedures, domestic violence, domestic disturbance, religious tolerance and interviewing. Some of the more hands-on training include searches, apprehension, investigating crime scenes, use of force, handcuffing techniques, clearing buildings and weapons training.

Providing safety and security for Iraqi citizens is a major step in handing over total control of the government to Iraqi officials. From classroom lectures to hands-on practical exercises, the Al Anbar Security College is preparing the local police force for a safe, secure future.

DFAC Council Meeting Positive

The dining facility council held its bi-weekly meeting Oct. 31st. The goal of the council is to express the views, opinions and recommendations of soldiers regarding dining facility operations and to offer suggestions on ways to enhance the operation.

The council consists of soldiers representing each tenant unit living on Champion Base. The council includes the Champion Base Food Service Advisor, Food Service Supervisor, Food Service Technician for KBR and a representative from the command group.

During the recent meeting, Command Sgt. Major Wolf Amacker offered many suggestions. Some of the comments made included

offering more items during the midnight meal such as, sweet tea, peanut butter and assorted fruits. Many soldiers like the tuna fish being offered, as well as the sandwich bar.

Other suggestions included serving fruit at all meals and fresh baked pastries for breakfast. Many soldiers would like to see more name-brand products offered.

Currently, the dining facility staff is working on hot water for the hand wash stations. They have also opened up the dining facility on Sundays after 2100 hours for soldiers to watch football.

A full copy of the actual minutes and the participants can be obtained from the Champion Base Mayor's website or by calling 582-5001.

Chinook Crash Kills 16 Bound for Leave

Spc. Michael J. Carden
82nd Airborne Public Affairs

AMIRYAH, Iraq-A CH-47 Chinook helicopter carrying soldiers attached to the 82nd Airborne Division crashed around 9 a.m. Nov. 2nd, near the city of Amiryah, approximately 40 miles west of the capital city.

The helicopter was one of two twin rotary aircrafts transporting troops to Baghdad International Airport who were scheduled for leave to either Germany or the United States and rest and recuperation passes in Qatar.

It was reported a shoulder fired missile struck the helicopter just before it crashed into a field in a farming area.

A ground force secured the crash site while an aerial quick reaction team air lifted the casualties to Army hospitals near Fallujah and Baghdad.

The medical staff of Company C, 82nd Forward Support Battalion, 82nd Airborne Div., rushed into an emotional roller coaster as they prepared medical supplies and doctors for the injured soldiers' arrival.

"We do a lot of rehearsals to prep for this type of situation," said 2nd Lt. Kathleen Youngstrom, medical platoon leader for treatment. "But, we always hope that it never happens."

There were 16 dead and 22 wounded in the deadliest attack on U.S. troops since March 23, a day that eleven were killed in action and nine were wounded.

Cpl. Eustace King, automated logistics specialist, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Abn. Div., expressed his anger for the tragic event.

"I can't understand why they (Iraqi's) want to attack us," he said. "We're here to give them the freedom they've only dreamed of. We train their police department; we rebuild their hospitals and schools."

King, who is originally from the western coast of Africa, went to attend church that morning, just as he does every Sunday. About 20 minutes before the service was supposed to start, the chaplain informed him

that it would be rescheduled due to casualties being brought to the base camp's hospital. He quickly went to help.

"Tears filled my eyes," he said. "When you see a soldier die in front of you, a soldier who wears the same uniform, the same American flag on his right shoulder-I became furious as I witnessed my fellow soldiers suffering in pain."

The repercussions of war are a sobering fact, but the paratroopers deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom see it as their patriotic duty.

King and his fellow soldiers realize the dangers they may face in Iraq. Nevertheless, proudly, they are here to help restore and rebuild this country in spite of the attacks that have taken place, such as this attack on the Chinook.

"We are not politicians," King said. "We

are soldiers under oath. We do not ask why, when or how. We fight, protect and are willing to die for our country."

Question of the Week

What is the longest river in western Asia?

Last Weeks Answer:

The active component comprises the majority of soldiers in Iraq.



U.S. Army photo by Cpl. Vernon O'Donnell

New PX Open - Sgt. 1st Class Kenneth Warren, right, helps Staff Sgt. Shannon Wofford, a supply sergeant with Division Artillery, with a question before Wofford decides to purchase an X-Box. Wofford was one of the first soldiers to get a chance to shop at the newly opened PX here at Champion Base. The new PX is located near the arches across from the postal unit and its new hours are 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, and on Sundays from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.

According to Warren, an NCO with Division Chemical who is in charge of running the PX, two trips a week are made to Al Asad and one to Baghdad International Airport to restock the goods. Everything from recreational items such as X-Box's and DVDs to more essential items, such as flashlight bulbs and personal hygiene supplies are available here.



U.S. Army photo by Cpl. Joe Niesen

Next - Spc. Raymond Jordan works with a local interpreter to address a claim from one of Al Anbar's citizens at the CMOC located in the governor's building in Ar Ramadi.

CMOC Offers Help, Solutions to Locals

Cpl. Joe Niesen

350th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

AR RAMADI, Iraq-Located at the governor's building in Al Anbar's capital city, the Civil Military Operations Center(CMOC) staff works hard to settle disputes, manage claims, locate resources and a host of other tasks designed to foster a lasting relationship between the Coalition Forces and the citizens of Iraq's largest province.

"Basically, we serve as a go-between for the military command and local population; we try and act as mediators between the Army and the locals. It's our goal to please everyone at the same time," said Sgt. 1st Class Albert Pando, 353rd Civil Affairs Command from New York City.

To facilitate this goal, the soldiers working under the 304th Civil Affairs Brigade have organized a permanent shop in the governor's building to handle complaints and claims from the local population.

Most come for aid; many are simply looking for work, said Hassan Mohammad Ali, an interpreter working with the CMOC. "I think that most of the people working here are happy to help, or at least try and help," he added.

Mohammad Ali and other staff members work at the main desk serving as the central communications hub for the center. Together with the soldiers, they have been able to organize the system and process claims accurately and in a timely manner.

"This is a one stop service center," explained Pando.

He explained that all individuals with claims must first be logged into the system where they will be queued and directed to the proper department for processing.

According to Spc. Raymond Jordan, 304th, from Philadelphia, Penn. the center handles, on average, approximately 40 claims per day on topics ranging from detained relatives, to domestic disputes.

Once the problem has been identified, the claimant is sent to one of several offices where trained military or civilian officers listen and attempt to solve any problems.

"We provide a personable interface," said Pando.

The CMOC also handles the hiring of contractors for construction projects in the region, such as, sewage systems, roads and government buildings and other public works.

"The unit who came before us did a good job getting things started," said Spc. Brian Carter, 304th, from New Jersey.

According to several members of the CMOC staff, the work of the previous Civil Affairs team has allowed them to move forward on the projects quickly and efficiently.

Still, each member of the staff works to ensure that all claims are handled with the same degree of dedication, whether it is simply acting as a sounding board for complaints, or seeing that contractors are paid on time.

"We are planting the seeds now to get the Iraqi way of life improved," said Pando.

Soldiers Think Smart; Save Lives

Sgt. Joe Healy

82nn Airborne Public Affairs

FOB RIDGEWAY, Iraq - As the war against terrorism escalates; U.S. policy makers say the U.S. military needs to find creative ways to protect soldiers against our new 21st century enemy. Soldiers stationed in the Sunni Triangle have recently developed an inventive answer to one of their most pressing problems - convoy security.

Using old Iraqi bunker metal doors, soldiers from the 782nd Main Support Battalion, 82nd Airborne Division have designed and produced custom-made Humvee and Light Tactical

"Now that my Humvee is fitted with the new doors and floorboards, I feel safer driving around here,"

Pfc. Corey O'Conner

Vehicle doors and floorboards. The old Iraqi bunker metal now protects US soldiers against improvised explosive devices and small arms fire while on convoys. Currently, Alpha Troop, 1st Battalion, 117th Cavalry Regiment, 82nd Airborne Division, uses the doors and floorboards on seven of their Humvees.

"Now that my Humvee is fitted with the new doors and floorboards, I feel safer driving around here," said Pfc. Corey O'Conner, a cavalry scout, A Troop, 1st Bat., 117th Cavalry, 82nd Airborne Division. Covered in dust with the bright sun beating down on his face, O'Conner just completed an hour-long convoy to secure the area and gather intelligence about the recent crash of a CH-47 Chinook helicopter when he spoke of his newly outfitted Humvee.

"The floor boards are bolted down and the doors provide greater visibility while I'm driving. The bunker metal weighs less than sandbags making my HMMWV handle the road well."

According to Staff Sgt. Robin Mitchell, a mechanic with service section, F Company, 782nd MSB, the bunker metal doors were left-over in the desert by the Iraqis at the end of the war. The doors are approximately 30 feet tall and 15 feet wide and ¼ inch thick. His unit cuts the metal to fit the vehicles. One bunker metal sheet produces enough doors and floorboards for eight Humvees. The driver side and front passenger's side doors and floor boards are fitted with the metal while the back seats are left untouched.

Mitchell said his unit was tasked with ways to improve convoy security. He asked his soldiers for any suggestions, and the next day one of his young soldiers hand-sketched the idea to better protect Humvees and LMTVs. Production started right away.

"The sketches were a blue-print and everybody just started pitching in to make this work," said Mitchell.

Mitchell stated that each vehicle's floor boards and doors are made custom to the vehicle. The dimensions vary from vehicle to vehicle. His goal is to modify one vehicle per day.

Before fitting the Humvees with the bunker metal, Mitchell and

his unit decided to test the metal's strength. A freshly cut bunker metal door and seven pounds of C-4 explosive was placed inside a one-story building. The door and the explosives were placed three feet apart. After the explosives detonated, the building totally collapsed, but the bunker door remained 90 percent intact.

"It's a very strong, dependable metal that held up against our tests," said Mitchell.

One of the major problems during the production was building the door's handle.

"The door handles were a little bit of a problem at first," said 1st Lt. Michael Mosby, platoon leader, 3rd Platoon, A Troop, 1st Battalion, 117th Cavalry Regiment. "We went back to the MSB guys and asked them to change it."

After making a few different models, we ultimately came up with a simple latch that rotates 360 degrees making it easy for soldiers to open and shut, said Mitchell.

Mitchell also stated that the doors are hinged to the Humvees. The bunker metal doors can be easily removed and the regular doors can be placed on again.

According to Mosby, his unit has an additional 22 vehicles ready for door installation.

In addition to the bunker metal doors and floor boards, Mosby said some troops cover the inside face of the doors with a Kevlar blanket for extra protection.

"The Kevlar blanket stops any extra debris from the bunker door," said Mosby.



U.S. Army photo by Chief Warrant Officer Roy Mitchell

Spc. Dwight Barnes, service section, Fox Company, 782nd Main Support Battalion, holds a Humvee door made of bunker metal. The door withstood a seven pound C-4 explosive blast that destroyed a one story building.

Soldiers are not the only ones who are happy with the new metal doors and floor boards, the unit's commander is too.

"We've logged over 10,000 miles in the last couple of months," said Capt. Todd Franken, company commander, Alpha Troop, 1st Battalion, 117th Cavalry Regiment, 82nd Airborne Division. "These roads are scattered with improvised explosive devices. These new bunker metal doors make our soldiers feel safer and more secure."

The Back Page...

Predictability, Stability at Heart of Rotation Policy

WASHINGTON, Nov. 5, 2003 - Predictability and stability are at the heart of the new troop rotation policy DoD officials announced today.

DoD started notifying a total of approximately 75,000 active and reserve component service members Nov. 5 for duty in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom. It is a "ground heavy" deployment, although some Navy and Air Force personnel are affected.

"In this force rotation, we've tried to give people the longest notice possible, so that they, ... their families, their employers will have some time to prepare," said Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld.

The 1st Marine Div. - augmented by a brigade from the Army's 25th Inf. Div. - will deploy to Iraq. The Marines will deploy 20,000; the Army brigade will have 7,000. The division will serve in the area

now patrolled by the 82nd Abn. Div.

In addition, 43,000 reserve component personnel have been alerted that they may be mobilized for service in Oper. Iraqi Freedom. DoD also alerted some 3,700 National Guard and reserve forces who may be mobilized for service in Operation Enduring Freedom.

"By earlier notifications, we've tried to provide additional time for training up," Rumsfeld said.

The deployment will drop the number of troops in Iraq from 130,000 to about 105,000 by May 2004.

The four U.S. divisions in Iraq will drop to three. The current 17 brigade-sized units in Iraq will drop to 13.

"We're bringing in forces that are appropriate to deal with the evolving threats in Iraq today, including more mobile infantry elements," he continued. "So while the number of U.S. forces may be level or decline slightly, this much is certain: The overall capability of the security forces in Iraq will increase."

Challenges in Management of Reserve Forces

WASHINGTON, Nov. 5, 2003 - Recruiting and retention has "held up nicely despite stress on the force as a whole," Undersecretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness David Chu told members of the House Armed Services Committee here today.

And a survey of military personnel, active and reserve, which is done every four months, shows a "higher level of satisfaction with military life than three to four years ago," he added. "Their intentions to stay (in the military) remain strong."

"The nation can be proud of the service of its citizens in military uniform today," said Chu. "The force has done extraordinary things in the last two years."

Chu explained charts showing the rise and decline of deployments to the U.S. Central Command area of operations since Sept. 11, 2001. He noted

that in the next "six months or so" as forces rotate out of Iraq, there will be a temporary increase in the number of reserve mobilizations as units being prepared for deployment will be brought to active duty.

The undersecretary said there have been a series of challenges in managing the reserve forces. He said the goal is to give reservists at least 30 days' notice. Acknowledging that this was not always the case, Chu said, "We need to do better and I think the next round will be better."

He also spoke of the need to ensure that the "same people" are not called up time after time.

He said another challenge is to "set and meet expectations of reserve personnel regarding terms of service." After Sept. 11, 2001, reservists were called up for one year, he said. However, based on advice from commanders in the field who said they needed "continuity," the policy was changed so units in Iraq would serve "on the ground" for one year.

President Signs \$87.5 Billion Package for Iraq, Afghanistan

WASHINGTON, Nov. 6, 2003 - "No enemy or friend can doubt that America has the resources and the will to see this war through to victory," said President Bush before signing the \$87.5 billion supplemental appropriations bill for military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

"Today, the United States is making a critical financial commitment to this global strategy to defeat terror," he told those assembled in the White House East Room today. "We're supporting our servicemen and women in the field of battle. We're supporting reconstruction and the emergence of democratic institutions in a vital area of the world. The American people accept these responsibilities now in our time so that we will not face far greater dangers in the future."

The bill provides \$64.7 billion for military operations in Iraq, in Afghanistan and elsewhere. Of this, about \$51 billion is for Operation Iraqi Freedom and \$10 billion for Operation Enduring Freedom. The remaining monies will cover costs with Operation Noble Eagle and support for allies in the war on terror.

"We're supporting such basic military necessities as air, rail and sea transportation for American and coalition troops to the theaters of action," said Bush. "We will purchase ammunition for our weapons and fuel and spare parts for airplanes and helicopters and vehicles. We will replace equipment lost or damaged in combat. We will acquire vital new equipment such as armored humvees and body armor and communications gear."

"Our servicemen and women are carrying out their missions with skill and honor and they deserve the finest equipment and best weapons we can provide," he added.

The legislation contains funds to pay service members, including hazardous duty pay, said Bush. "We'll also cover all the salaries of National Guard and Reserve troops who have left jobs and home and families in an hour of national need," he pointed out. "The American government will keep its responsibilities to all who risk their lives for America."

"We'll help train and equip the growing number of Iraqis and Afghans who are fighting and dying to defend and secure their rights," said the president.